Prep: The Essential College Cookbook

Katie Sullivan Morford
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It's not difficult to slip into the trap of eating out way too often when you're first living on your own, especially given the allure of pub grub and takeout. As a dietician and the mother of three teenagers, Katie Morford offers a different path with *Prep: The Essential College Cookbook.* It's designed for beginners who like to eat and entertain with friends, but who may need a little nudge to get cracking in the kitchen.

A consistent and reassuring tone and the confidence-building organization of the book sets up novice cooks for success. Morford tells college students to dispense with Instagram standards of food perfection and focus instead on making good meals that fit their busy schedules and limited finances. She introduces basic techniques and basic kitchen set-ups to encourage beginners who don't have a lot of money or equipment.

Most of all, she focuses on flavorful food favorites that are easy to prepare, including breakfast burritos, burgers, and tacos. Her enthusiastic instructions, recipe introductions, and titles are witty and inviting. Who could be daunted by So Easy Couscous or a chapter on how to Fix a Killer Plate of Pasta? The cookbook doesn't presume previous cooking knowledge, so there are sidebars on topics like how to wash lettuce and hard boil eggs.

Morford slips in a lot of vegetables, beans, grains, and other healthy ingredients and recipes, but there are also some decadent treats and dinner party menu ideas included. The emphasis is on using fresh and healthy ingredients, but Morford notes ways that cooks can economize, from cooking and storing in bulk to relying on cheaper cuts of meat and college student staples of eggs and noodles.

Prep is an encouraging and informative introduction to home cooking that would be a handy gift for someone headed off to college or their first apartment.

RACHEL JAGARESKI (May/June 2019)

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